



**Bolivian**Express  
Grupo Express-Press

# TOP 10

Free Distribution — Issue 8

**NIGHT SPOTS**

**MOVIES**

**AYMARA NAMES**

**LLAMITA BLANCA**

**CULTURAL SHOCKS**

**LLAMITA BLANCA**

**SHOCKS**

**STREET FOOD**

**8**

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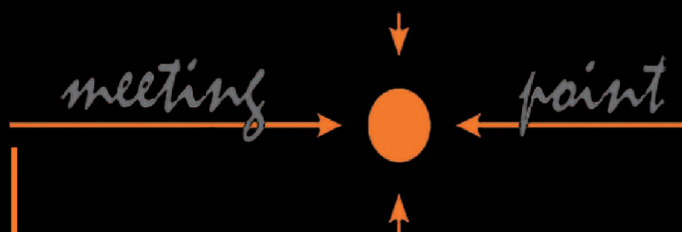
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La Paz – Bolivia, May 2011

## GLOSSARY

1. **DIABLADA**  
A style of dance combining Catholic and indigenous elements. In Bolivia it is performed during Carnaval, el Gran Poder and other festivals. It is traditionally danced in reverence to the Virgin of Socavón, although today the celebrations have a very secular character.
2. **CUECA**  
A traditional dance of courtship between a man and a woman in which each dancer carries a handkerchief in their right hand.
3. **CAMPESINO**  
A person that lives in the country side
4. **AYLLU**  
The basic social and political unit of Quechua and Aymara societies, the ayllu was an extended family group which lived in a collective fashion with other ayllus. Each owned a parcel of land which was their responsibility, but products of the land were owned collectively.
5. **CHUÑO/TUNTA**  
Freeze-dried potatoes using ancient techniques involving repeated exposure to sunshine and frost. These dehydrated potatoes have an unusual texture and a distinctive nutty flavour
6. **MOTE**  
From the quechua mut'i, this is another word for choclo; maize, i.e. corn
7. **CASERITO/A**  
This is the word used to address a saleswoman or man at markets (ex: "How much are the carrots, caserita?")
8. **EMPANADA**  
Small delicious fatty piece of heaven; a crescent-shaped pastry filled with cheese, sometimes spicy, sometimes sweet, always deep-fried!
9. **MESTIZO**  
Mixed Race - someone with both native and european heritage
10. **JAILON**  
Young upper class paceños
11. **CH'API**  
Bolivian slang for tacky, cheap, un-cool. If somebody describes your fashion sense as ch'api you need to worry.
12. **SINGAM**  
Local spirit made out of grapes. Where did the colour go? No-one knows (ok, someone probably knows). The point is it's crystal clear and gives you a rabid hangover.
13. **PIQUEOS**  
Snacks of all kinds - chips or peanuts served at bars, food to share. Can be used to describe any between-meal eats.
14. **CHARANGO**  
Typical string instrument popular throughout the Andean altiplano; it has five pairs of strings and looks like a small guitar. The sound is similar to the banjo. They are often elaborately decorated, traditionally with armadillo armour covering the convex resonance box.

# TOP TEN

Top Tens seem to be everywhere these days, from recommendation blogs and travel guides to human rights charters. The need for this form of written expression stems from three lamentable human traits: a short attention span (eleven items on any list prove to be simply too taxing), chronic lack of good judgement (how could you possibly choose from this world's infinite panoply of wonders unless someone's researched something thoroughly and ranked it for you first?), and an obsession with round figures. Here are ten reasons why you should read this issue of the Bolivian Express:

- 1) Because it's been put together by a group of ten people (give or take a few) who've worked hard to distil some of their experiences in Bolivia into easily digestible droplets of juicy information.
- 2) Feeling thirsty? Before you open that bottle of **Singani** and try and drink it on your own, you might want to learn why doing so might not sit all that well with the locals. If that comes as somewhat of a culture-shock for you, then we can guarantee it won't be your last. Isaac Bloch runs you through the rest. Salud!
- 3) Talking of shocks - when visiting Bolivia, you should see suffering from food poisoning as a rite of passage. Everyone gets something shady lurking in their intestines at least once, and some brave souls even come back for seconds. If you haven't yet fulfilled your food-poisoning-quota, Camilla Swift gives you the ten best Bolivian street foods to get you started. Mmm, qué rico!
- 4) Talking of food poisoning, if you're a Gringo, you're roughly ten times more likely to incur the wrath of local parasites (I think I read that somewhere but I may be making it up). That aside, there are as many good things about being a Gringuito as there are bad things -at least according to the 50 locals we surveyed. Ciaran Raymer goes through them all.
- 5) Talking of Gringos, did you know that, socially speaking, they're more likely to get away with giving their kids Aymara names? Helen Reid explains why this is so and runs you through ten popular names and their meanings.
- 6) On a somewhat unrelated note, Rosalie Bonnefoi decided to be a good sport and rise to the challenge of writing a film review in a format fitting with the rest of this issue. Read her article to discover what film you need to watch next. It involves llamas.
- 7) On a completely unrelated note, a recent study has shown that the best way to use a magazine is to hold it in your hands and look at it while you flick the pages. In an experiment, 300 volunteers were given a magazine by researchers at the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés. The first group were told to use it as toilet paper, the second group were told to use it to light a fire, and the third were told to look at it for 20 minutes. The first group overwhelmingly reported it was "too scratchy", the second group claimed this practice was "inefficient as the paper doesn't burn well" and that it was "bad for the environment". The third group reported high levels of satisfaction, even among those who were illiterate. You see? Yet another reason to read this issue.
- 8) Are you tired of bumping into scruffy groups of travellers holding the same dog-eared copy of Lonely Planet? No need to pretend you don't know them or feel compelled to make gap-year small-talk. Use our handy Cultural Events Calendar at the back to steer away from the beaten track and plunge right into the local mainstream. If you want to drink your socks off and go clubbing until you're coca-green in the face you should also read the team's article on the Top Ten Night Spots in La Paz. Don't blame us if you bump into those lame-o travellers again, it might even be the Bolivian Express team. Sorry.
- 9) Getting more readers means we can offer advertising at higher rates. Higher advertising rates means we are better able to cover our running costs. This leaves more money aside for buying tasty food for the Bolivian Express cats (Gata and Kandinski). So in effect, by reading this magazine you are indirectly helping to spoil two cute cats.
- 10) As there are two cats the above reason actually counts twice (as if you'd need any further persuading to flip the page and start reading).

So there you have it. I hope you enjoy this issue and email me if you have any comments, thoughts or ideas. Serious or otherwise.

Seriously,  
**Amaru Villanueva Rance**  
amaru.vr@bolivianexpress.org

**N.B.** Several Spanish and Aymara words are marked in **bold** throughout this issue. Their meanings can be found in the glossary on page 3



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# BEST NIGHT SPOTS

TEXT: CAMILLA SWIFT AND HELEN REID

## THE MOST QUIRKY:

**La Costilla de Adán** - Pasaje Aspiazu 743  
Discreet and mysterious, La Costilla is a hidden gem. The owner opened the two-story place in what was his home, and has crammed it full of curios and artifacts collected over the years. Words don't do it justice - visit to find out more!

## THE MOST INDUSTRIAL:

**Diesel** - Av 20 de Octubre 2271  
A grunge-chic bar / restaurant with fascinating post-apocalyptic décor: Train tracks leading up to the entrance, propeller dangling from the ceiling, car engines on the walls and sci-fi toilets. One would expect hard metal music to fit the theme, but a surprisingly chilled blues and acoustic guitar soundtrack accompanies delicious cocktails and **piqueos**.

## THE MOST ELECTRIC:

**Traffic** - Av Arce 2549  
Popular bar-cum restaurant cum-club. Electro, house and hip-hop keep the dancefloor heaving till the wee hours!

## THE MOST JAZZY:

**Thelonious** - Av 20 de Octubre 2172  
With an intimate atmosphere, Thelonious Jazz Bar hosts live jazz and Brazilian music Wednesday - Saturday.

## THE MOST GRINGO: MONGO'S:

Hermanos Manchego 2444

As the huge Australian flag behind the bar suggests, this La Paz hotspot is packed with grinding gringo backpackers on most nights. It transforms, however, on Tuesday nights when a live Salsa band attracts a much more local crowd.

## THE MOST LATINO:

Mama Diablo - Av 6 de Agosto

Salsa central! Live Salsa and Cumbia bands every weekend ensure an energetic night of dancing, if you want to escape the gringo crowd...

## THE MOST EXPLOSIVE:

The Star of India -

Calle Cochabamba 170

Well-renowned among backpackers and locals as the ultimate place to test your taste buds: the Vindaloo Challenge (a 35-chili-strong curry, seemingly infinite, but must be finished) is truly horrific and we're not entirely sure the T-shirt reward is worth the consequences... We won't go into details!

## THE MOST ALTERNATIVE:

TTkos -

Calle México 1551

This cool cave-style basement club is the perfect place to boogie with the locals! Meditation Mondays, Reggae Tuesdays, Other Reality Wednesdays, World Party Thursdays, Big Party Fridays and Saturdays... Spoilt for choice!

## THE MOST AUTHENTIC:

Peña Marka Tambo - Calle Jaén 710

Immersion in a beautiful Bolivian bubble of dance, song and music. Exuberant show of traditional dancing (including characters from Bolivian legend such as the Diablo) as well as hilarious stand-up comedy with lovingly satirical comments on Paceño life, and a quartet of musicians from Tarija playing instruments such as the **charango**.

## THE MOST BOHEMIAN:

Etno Café - Calle Jaén

A strong smell of incense sets the scene for this cosy hippie hide-out with original details like tables painted to look like Jupiter! Regular cultural events such as film showings, **charango** concerts and even literature clubs attract Paceño art students. Moreover, it's the only place in La Paz that serves Ajenjo (a drink equally as hallucinogenic as Absinth)!





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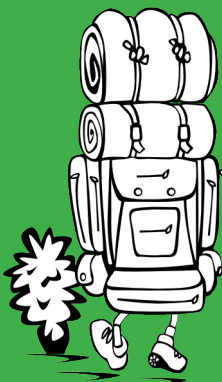


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# GO



# GRINGO GO

TEXT CIARAN RAYMER

WHEN I HEAR THE WORD "GRINGO", THE FIRST THING I THINK OF IS MEXICO. HOWEVER THE WORD IS USED THROUGHOUT SPANISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES. IN SPAIN, FOR EXAMPLE, IT WAS FIRST USED TO DESCRIBE FOREIGNERS IN MALAGA AND MADRID WHO SPOKE SPANISH WITH AN ACCENT. POPULAR LOCAL BELIEF STATES THAT THE TERM WAS MADE OFFENSIVE IN MEXICO, WHEN THE MEXICANS CALLED FOR THE AMERICAN ARMY TO LEAVE THEIR COUNTRY. THE US ARMY WORE GREEN UNIFORMS, AND SO THE TERM 'GREEN-GO!' CAME ABOUT. TODAY IN BOLIVIA, 'GRINGO' REMAINS AN OFFENSIVE TERM, BUT WHAT COUNTS AS A GRINGO?

"GRINGO" IS THE STEREOTYPICAL DESCRIPTION OF A PERSON FROM AMERICA OR EUROPE, THOUGH FOREIGNERS, WHITE PEOPLE, AND BLONDES IN GENERAL CAN ALSO QUALIFY AS BEING GRINGOS. THE STEREOTYPICAL GRINGO IS NORDIC IN APPEARANCE : TALL, WHITE (OR SUNBURNT), WITH BLONDE HAIR AND BLUE EYES. BESIDES THE STRIKING DIFFERENCES IN APPEARANCE BETWEEN GRINGOS AND BOLIVIANS, ONE CAN ALSO SPOT THEM BY THEIR APPAREL - WHICH INCLUDES BUT ISN'T LIMITED TO; LLAMA PRINT/ALPACA CLOTHING, FLIP FLOPS, KHAKI SHORTS, HIKING BOOTS, AND THEIR TRUSTY CAMERA HANGING FROM THEIR BODY.

BUT HOW DO PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT THEM?

- 1 **Small things** – This includes the way in which gringos dress, the accents they speak with, and the fact that some of them don't know Spanish, making communication difficult (though some gringos try by repeating themselves over and over, hoping the locals will magically master the English language)
- 2 **Attitude** – The local people find that gringos are cold and unfriendly towards them, and that they care nothing about Bolivia or its culture. This enforces the local rumour that gringos enjoy imposing themselves on others and interfering in business that isn't their own.
- 3 **Arrogance** – Many people find that gringos carry an air of superiority. That is, they appear presumptuous, sometimes snobbish, because of the differences in levels of development between their countries and Bolivia.
- 4 **They hold others in contempt** – Carrying on from the second point, the attitude carried by the gringos makes the locals feel like they are constantly being looked down on and belittled.
- 5 **Drugs** – One of the biggest problems associated with gringos is their open relationship with drugs. The 'Route 36' club is world famous for its trafficking of cocaine, which gets served tableside by smartly dressed waiters and attracts many tourists from Europe and America.

- 1 **They're friendly!** – Many find that gringos are cheery, and very easy to get along with. They are described as easygoing social beings with open minds and good manners (especially towards the ladies)
- 2 **Attitude** – Gringos carry a 'make every day count' attitude that spreads to the people around them. These gringos make us want to climb Illimani, or take on The Worlds Most Dangerous Vindaloo.
- 3 **They're exotic** – People in every country find foreigners exotic. Bolivia is no exception to the rule. With notably different features, accents, fashion sense, and customs from the locals, gringos are loved for being different
- 4 **Travel stories** – Lots of gringos pass through Bolivia as backpackers and drifters, making them full of exciting and thrilling stories, like that time they were sent straight to the loo after eating the wrong street food, or when they were chased from a cathedral for taking pictures inside...
- 5 **They contribute to the economy** – By eating from local restaurants, going to museums, and engaging in the activities a country has to offer, gringos put money into a country's economy – a major source of income for some places.



For the record, the information for this article was taken from a survey completed by a group of 50 university students, whose answers range from approving of gringos, to an almost xenophobic view on foreigners in general. This is what people like about gringos.







TEXT: ROSALIE BONNEFOI

THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT CINEMA IS A CRUCIAL WAY OF IMMERSING YOURSELF INTO THE CULTURE OF A COUNTRY, ESPECIALLY TO DISCOVER THE MENTALITY OF ITS PEOPLE, HISTORY, HUMOUR, AND A WHOLE WAY OF THINKING ARE FOCUSED THROUGH THE DIRECTOR'S EYE. ¿QUIÉN MATÓ A LA LLAMITA BLANCA? (WHO KILLED THE LITTLE WHITE LLAMA, 2006), RODRIGO BELLOTT'S SECOND FILM, IS A WILD SATIRE ON BOLIVIAN CORRUPTION, A VARIATION ON BOTH THE BUDDY FLICK AND THE ROAD MOVIE THAT TAKES TWO INEPT DRUG-RUNNERS ON A TRIP FROM EL ALTO TO SANTA CRUZ.

1. Because this movie gives a sharply exposed overall view of Bolivia that lampoons many clichés. It will show you the little known aspects of this country with perceptiveness and humour.

2. The mere sight of Guery Sandoval (the Bolivian actor who plays the narrator), sitting on his little bike and ironically revealing the plot development is a pure joy.

3. Despite being a comedy there is a deeper message that pertinently denounces political scandal, racism, poverty and drug trafficking, and the question raised by the title itself : how can the media make such a big deal over a llama's death and ignore these bigger issues?

4. Because it contains amazing photography of Bolivian landscapes. Aesthetically very pleasing.

5. Because Bellott is excusing no one, everyone gets laughed at: from the French NGO worker who keeps repeating that "coca is not cocaine" to the Hare Krishna disciples debating whether to eat chicken or not...we are

delighted at this two fingers up to political correctness.

6. In this movie you hear a lot of Bolivian slang, which is useful to add to your Spanish vocabulary - like **ch'api**, for example. And there are little pseudo-scientific captions to explain!

7. Because Jacinto and Domitila, los Tortolitos (the Lovebirds) are like a wacky Bolivian version of Bonnie and Clyde.

8. The incongruous mix of Bolivian folk music and heavy metal suits the overall irreverence of the movie perfectly.

9. After seeing it, this is the film you'll want to show anyone who is keen to understand more about the little-known sides of Bolivia.

10. It makes you laugh and makes you think.



# TOP 10 STREET AND MARKET FOODS

TEXT AND PHOTO: CAMILLA SWIFT

people say that eating out in bolivia can be hazardous, especially on the streets, and this is one area where travellers should not over-economise; the satisfaction accrued from saving the odd dollar here and there by eating in the markets and on the streets will soon be outweighed by the trauma of spending hours on the toilet. this i don't deny, but there are just so many tasty local specialities to try that, as long as you're careful and give your stomach time to adjust, it would be a real shame to miss out. after some research and having asked the locals where is the best place to try each snack, i hit the streets of la paz and tried the lot... so far my stomach is holding out! from huminta to fricasé to llaucha, choosing was difficult but here are my top 10 bolivian street and market foods.

1. **● SALTEÑA** - Avenida Arce, Sopocachi  
You can't fail to spot the salteña, a meat or chicken pasty which is sold absolutely everywhere. Mostly eaten as a mid-morning snack, you will find salteñas being sold at little side stalls, on almost every street, any time between 9am and noon. These small and incredibly moreish pasties are usually filled with meat (although vegetarian ones are sometimes available), olives, and slices of boiled egg, and are completely irresistible. The trick is to eat them without spilling the copious amounts of sauce all over yourself (not very easy, particularly on buses or on the move).

"It's food that's quick, easy and tasty to have on the go" says Doña Cecilia, who now recognises me I'm such a regular customer of hers!

2. **● ANTICUCHO** - Av. 20 de Octubre, esq. Aspiazu  
As the sun sets on the bustling city of La Paz, vendors set up their stands in anticipation of their hungry patrons on their way home from work. From hamburger carts to lomito and salchicha stands, there is still nothing quite as tantalizing as the thick, smoky aroma of grilled meat - I am of course speaking of the famous anticucho.

Since I first tried anticucho it has been a favourite of mine, even before I learned what they were made from: anticuchos are small slices of beef heart and boiled potatoes on a skewer cooked over an open grill. The meat, often marinated

in spices such as cumin and garlic, and served with a delicious aji de mani sauce, is so tender I found it hard to believe it wasn't just thin slices of filet steak.

The anticucho's origin dates back to Pre-Columbian times and it was a popular dish among the inhabitants of the Inca Empire too, with scientific evidence and documentation from the Peruvian National Library Archive which shows that the Incas prepared the dish using llama meat as well as other local meats. The name anticucho is an Hispanicised Quechua word 'antikucho' (anti = Andes and kucho = cut). It is still popular throughout South America, particularly in the Andean regions of Bolivia, Peru and Chile, with Anticucheras readily found on many street corners.

"It's a very traditional dish, not just here in La Paz but throughout Bolivia. What makes it special is that it's cooked over an open grill and not in an oven" explains Doña Bartolina.

3. **● TUCUMANA** - Mercado Rodríguez, San Pedro  
Also eaten as a mid-morning snack or brunch, a tucumana is similar to a salteña but is deep-fried rather than baked, and has a higher potato content. This crescent-shaped pasty is filled with meat (normally beef, occasionally chicken, or charque), potato, egg, onion and sometimes even olives, carrots, peas and other vegetables.  
At first I considered the tucumana as just a slightly inferior salteña until I discovered

the giant ones at Rodríguez market - my point being that it really depends on where you try these things.

4. **● CHAIRO** - Miraflores Mercado Obrero  
Chairo - 'soup' in Aymara - is a thick meat and vegetable broth typical of La Paz. It consists of Andean vegetables such as **chuño** and is flavoured with oregano and hierba buena, an indigenous variety of mint. Traditionally prepared and eaten by **campesinos** in the Andes who walked long distances to work, this soup would provide energy for the day's work and nowadays you find it served in most markets at lunchtime.


5. **● CHORIPÁN** - Plaza Avaroa  
The simplicity of this nomenclature is brilliant. Choripán is exactly what it says on the tin: chorizo and bread - a heavily-condimented spicy sausage in a bun. As the **caserita** selling choripán on Plaza Avaroa told me, "It's a great snack, whenever you're a bit peckish, at whatever time of day" she adds "the chorizo is really tasty and it's not too heavy or fattening." Also a very popular street food in Argentina, choripán here in Bolivia is usually served with chimichurri - an Argentinian sauce made with garlic, chili, parsley and olive oil.

6. **● SILPANCHO** - Estadio Hernando Siles, Miraflores  
Silpancho is a popular Bolivian dish from Cochabamba, mainly served in markets rather than in street stalls. It consists of a thin fried breaded meat (a bit like a schnitzel) on a layer of rice and potatoes,




topped with a fried egg and served with chopped onion, tomato and locoto pepper.

Like most traditional dishes in Bolivia, silpancho is a huge and extremely filling meal that certainly doesn't skimp on the carbohydrates. Definitely not a dish for dieters, but very delicious!

7.  **CHARQUEKÁN** - Feria del Alto  
Regardless of what the Chileans say, charquekán is a Bolivian dish. You may not be aware of the alleged tendency Chile has to appropriate cultural symbols from other countries; like the **Diablada**, a folkloric dance originally from Oruro, or pisco, a drink which has been registered as Chilean when in fact it comes from Pisco, Peru. They took the sea from Bolivia, and now they claim charquekán, a speciality local to Oruro, to be theirs!


Charquekán is shredded, cured llama meat (similar to beef jerky) served with choclo (white corn), **chuño**, potatoes, cheese and a hard boiled egg.

8.  **CEVICHE** - Plaza Avaroa  
Although technically speaking ceviche is originally from Peru, it is so widely eaten here in Bolivia that even Bolivians often don't know it's Peruvian! The basic ingredient is raw fish which is marinated in lemon juice. The citric acid in the juice changes the texture of the fish, without changing its 'raw' taste. Ceviche is an old tradition in South America, dating back to the Incas who preserved their fish with fruit juice.

This tasty lemony fish dish is often served from little stalls on the roadside or around the outside of plazas or parks. However, be warned! The lemon juice 'cooks' the fish and alters the structure of the proteins, making it appear opaque and firm, but it does not kill bacteria and parasites as well as heat does. So, unless the fish is fresh and prepared in clean surroundings, ceviche can result in an unwelcome case of Atahualpa's Revenge!

Ceviche is typically eaten at lunch or brunch and, because it is so light and refreshing, it is popular during the warmer months.

9.  **CHICHARRÓN** - Feria del Alto  
Chicharrón is deep fried pork belly which is first boiled and then cooked in its own fat. It is served with **mote**, **chuño** and **tunta** (another form of freeze-dried potato) and is also an ingredient in other dishes such as Chairo.

10.  **HAMBURGUESA** - Avenida 6 de Agosto  
Although not authentically Bolivian, or even South American, these street hamburgers are truly delectable! Made with fresh ingredients, including fried **campesino** cheese, cooked on the grill, topped with plenty of chips and lashings of picante llajua sauce!

11

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# TOP 10 CULTURAL SHOCKS

TEXT: ISAAC BLOCH



- 1 CHOLITAS' TRADITIONAL DRESS:** possibly the first thing to stand out upon arriving in La Paz. The cholitas maintain a distinctive **mestizo** dress that includes bowler hats, vestiges of a fashion long rejected by the Spanish who originally brought it over the Atlantic. Their black hair, usually worn in two braids, is said to be a sign of their femininity amidst a life of hard work. But like the rest of Bolivia, the cholitas are changing. "It's interesting," Santos Tola, anthropologist and researcher of indigenous garments, reflected, "despite the pride that the cholitas have for their clothes, many of them don't want their daughters to follow their example. And some daughters reject the traditional outfits as well."
- 2 AYNI:** when I was first told that Bolivians don't drink alone, it didn't strike me as so different from back home. After all, most people in the U.S. would feel a bit awkward if we were found alone in our room polishing off a bottle of **Singani**. It wasn't until I actually sat down to drink with some friends in El Alto that I realized traditionally Bolivians don't even sip their alcohol unless everyone does it together. This custom is part of a much broader system of reciprocity, called Ayni, which has its roots in hundreds of years of Aymara tradition. Possibly the most surprising example I've heard about Ayni imposing its restrictions concerns a man who asked his younger brother to help him find a mariachi band for his wedding. Their mother pointed out that the younger sibling would then have to have a mariachi band at his own ceremony - provided by his older brother, of course. In the end, he got off with having them perform at his next birthday.
- 3 CULINARY ORIGINS:** Drinking aside, Spanish will only get you so far in Bolivia's culinary landscape - many of the dishes take their names from Aymara and Quechua. Although **empanadas** can be found all over Latin America, here when they are large and fried they go by the name of Tucumanas (see p.XX). The *ají* is called *llajwa* and that yummy sweet purple drink? *Api*. At the same time, there are some surprising juxtapositions, such as the popular breakfast chain *Api: Happy*. Yes, English has infiltrated Bolivia's food vocabulary alongside Aymara and Quechua traditions. "Pizza" joints populate the streets, and hamburgers and hotdogs are mainstays of the early evening and late night snack hours.
- 4 DANCE:** Even after the **diabladas** are over with and Carnaval has been packed up, Bolivians have a distinctive vocabulary of movement that can in part be traced back to indigenous dances. At the dance clubs around La Pérez in La Paz Andean music pours from the windows, and inside the men and women pick up napkins from their tables to dance **cueca**. It would be wrong to describe Bolivia's entire Andean dance repertoire as falling into one genre: Afro-Bolivian and indigenous groups, La Paz and Oruro - each region and community has its own particular style.
- 5 PROTESTS:** Offices, schools and mid-week travel plans can be brought to a screeching halt by Bolivians' preferred method of political participation. While it has been a few years since the intense conflicts and demonstrations of 2003-2005, under President Morales citizens continue to express their opinion in the streets. Last month's Greater University of San Andres protests in La Paz cost two days of school, and were in response to financial and administrative infringement from the government on the University's autonomy. Evo's choice to raise petrol prices a few months ago (which itself elicited a violent reaction in the streets) has had a ripple effect on other prices, and the University employees have not been alone in marching down El Prado in hopes of getting a commensurate increase in their salaries.
- 6 LA ZONA SUR:** One of the biggest culture shocks might be finding something so similar to home (depending, of course, where you're coming from). So those from the States or Western Europe may be a bit confused when wandering through Zona Sur, an enclave of Western culture within La Paz. The people look less indigenous, you can find your favourite neighbourhood Burger King and they pronounce their "r's" in a distinctively American accent.
- 7 BOLIVIANISMS:** Bolivians may be known for having the clearest, slowest, easy-to-understand Spanish accent in all of South America (although it would be wrong to say there is just one Bolivian accent). Nevertheless, their speech is not without its idiosyncrasies. Echoes of "yaaa!" ricochet along the valleys of La Paz on Saturday nights, as groups of young friends react to each others' jokes with this preferred affirmation. More startling, at least for this writer, is being asked "de qué?" or even "por qué?" in response to thank-





A culture shock, like culture itself, can only be experienced subjectively. But after living in La Paz for two months, I've found there are certain aspects of life here that inevitably jump out at the uninitiated. What follows is an attempt to organize these moments and revelations into a list of observations, a "Top Ten" of culture shocks:

ing someone. After a short time though, I've learned to resist the impulse to explain to my cab drivers why I am grateful for their service.

**8 MOVIE CULTURE:** Don't wait to buy the latest new release until you leave Bolivia. The DVD black-market is teeming with the latest blockbusters, art-house classics and cutting edge documentaries. You may be surprised when your Bolivian friends break out trivia about Christopher Nolan's independent directorial beginnings before he did *Dark Night*. This reflects the fact that, without too much thought or expense, personal DVD collections here can easily grow to include hundreds of titles - all thanks to a developed pirating industry which brings in movies fast and, by-and-large, in high quality.

**9 MERCADOS:** Bolivia's buzzing informal markets are a nexus of such vastly different types of contraband, food goods and traditional medicine that they can be hard to absorb in one hit. Anything from HD cameras to peanuts can be found sprawled out among

these street markets, and all for a (suspiciously) reasonable price. La Paz's Mercado Rodríguez blends into Max Paredes, which, depending on whether you follow it up or down, splits into Huyustus and Mercado Lanza. And walking down certain parts of Calle Buenos Aires it's easy to be fooled that you've found another hidden centre of commerce, but despite all the vendors this market is so informal that it doesn't even have a name.

**10 TRAFFIC:** Meandering amid these busy streets, it's easy to become paranoid. But despite the appearance that all the cars are trying to run you down, they're really more indifferent towards the existence of pedestrians than anything else. With so much traffic normally blocking up the cities' arteries, the acceleration pedal is just too tempting on the rare occasion when drivers are presented with a street empty of other cars. Most frustrating is that the few intersections to actually have stoplights have them situated so that they are impossible to see from the sidewalk. The solution? Do as Bolivians do, and walk slowly.



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# TEN AYMARA NAMES AND MEANINGS

TEXT: HELEN REID

IN THE AYMARA CULTURE NAMES ARE VERY IMPORTANT AS THEY SYMBOLIZE PERSONALITY TRAITS; THE NAME IS THE EXPRESSION OF PARENTS' AMBITION FOR THEIR CHILD. APPROXIMATELY 70% OF BOLIVIANS HAVE AYMARA OR QUECHUA ROOTS, THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF INDIGENOUS POPULATION OF ALL SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRIES. HOWEVER THE INDIGENOUS AYMARA CULTURE IS ASTONISHINGLY BADLY KNOWN, DUE IN PART TO THE LEGACY OF THE DEVASTATING COLONIZATION BY THE SPANIARDS. CULTURES AROUND THE WORLD AFFIRM AND MAINTAIN THEIR CULTURAL IDENTITY BY CONTINUING A LEGACY OF NAMES GIVEN TO DAUGHTERS AND SONS, BUT HERE IN BOLIVIA IT IS VERY RARE TO MEET A PERSON WITH AN AYMARA NAME. WILMER IS ONE PACEÑO WHO DECIDED, WITH HIS WIFE, TO RESEARCH AND FIND AYMARA NAMES FOR HIS CHILDREN; HE SHARED WITH ME TEN BETTER-KNOWN AYMARA NAMES AND THEIR MEANINGS.

## GIRLS

1. **Nina** in Aymara means "fire which will never be extinguished". This name denotes a strong character, positive energy, vivacity, but like all Aymara names, it can also have negative connotations: stubbornness, excess.
2. **Nayra = Eye**. Nayra has a capacity for clairvoyance, sees things and can analyse and resolve problems with great clarity.
3. **Rina Aymara = Aymara path**. This unusual name is also quite controversial as it clearly shows the desire of the parents to reconnect with indigenous roots. It also denotes a pragmatic and ambitious personality, a life which will follow a clear path.
4. **Sartaña** means "to lift oneself up"; this name has deep spiritual significance, linked to the Quechua world vision of three planes: the kay pacha, this world, the janaq pacha (world of above) and the ukhu pacha (world of below). Sartaña has the capacity to communicate with janaq pacha.
5. **Kantuta** is a sacred flower for the Aymara, and the national flower of Bolivia, also known as "flower of the Incas". This name is linked with Inca nobility, and denotes beauty and purity. The colours of the specific "Kantuta tricolor" are red and yellow, which along with the green of the leaves reflect the colours of the Bolivian flag; thus the name affirms Bolivian as well as Aymara identity.

## BOYS

1. **Inti = Sun**. The sun is a crucial deity for the Aymara; part of the sacred couple of Sun and Moon who, together with the Pachamama (Mother Earth) created the world. To be called Inti is an honour, and Inti has a responsibility to guide others; he has to work from the earliest hours of the day!
2. **Amaru = Snake**. The snake is also an important Aymara deity, and the name is quite popular throughout the Andean region, has roots in the Quechua culture. The spiral shape of the snake is iconic of the Andean vision of the world in which the idea of cycles is very important; the symbol represents the cycle of life and death as well as agricultural cycles.
3. **Katari** means viper. Katari has a different representation than Amaru, and the name has more political significance for the Aymara. Tupac Katari was a great Aymara leader famous for his uprising against the Spaniards in the 18th century. The name thus carries great historical weight and is greatly respected. Katarism is the name given to the model of society in which the Aymara lived in pre-Hispanic times: the **ayllu**.
4. **Tunupa** is the name of a volcano in the Salar de Uyuni, the great salt flatlands of the south of Bolivia. Sacred to the Aymara, its bright red colour and towering presence explain the belief that Tunupa





was a supreme god and father of Aymara civilization, as well as god of volcanoes and lightning. The cult of Tunupa is thought to date back to pre-Tiwanaku times. Tunupa would be a natural leader with great influence.

5. **Illapa** is the name of the god of climate; thunder, rain and lightning. A boy named Illapa has a powerful relationship with nature; he can have medical powers, the ability to cure physical as well as spiritual ailments. In pre-Hispanic times many sacrifices were made to Illapa in periods of drought, to invoke rain, which Illapa was believed to pour out of a jar from the Milky Way.

It is not so much the meanings of Aymara names which are important, but rather the decision some Bolivian parents are making to relinquish the names of the Catholic calendar in order to better know and make known their indigenous roots. In Wilmer's case it was not easy for his decision to be accepted by his family. He tells me that in **jailón** circles it is acceptable to have a name of Aymara origin, and sometimes gringos or expatriates will give their children Aymara names for the sake of eccentricity (often not understanding their significance), but in the majoritarily indigenous lower social classes it is shocking to give children Aymara names. Wilmer talks of

a sense of shame attached to them and at school his daughters would receive strange looks from teachers. According to him "education is the problem"; since colonial times Bolivians have been pushed to "get rid of the Indian part of [their] identity". Are things changing today? There is hope that Morales' government will develop a fairer education system, in which proper attention is given to Aymara history and culture. A process of reaffirmation of Aymara identity has started, Wilmer tells me, and continuing the legacy of Aymara names is the first step to recovering a cultural identity as descendants of the great Aymara people.

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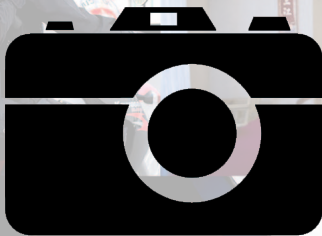


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# Cultural Calendar

## **TEATRO MUNICIPAL "ALBERTO SAAVEDRA PÉREZ", Calle Jenaro Sanjinés, corner w Calle Indaburo**

**Friday 27th to Sunday 29th – 7:30 PM**  
**Dance group "All that Jazz"**

Under the direction of Erika Ayala and Ana Espinoza, this team is preparing the revival of the musical "We Will Rock you" (2006), working with 50 first-rate artists, from ballerinas and choir-singers to musicians. The music will be directed by Giovano Salas while Mauricio Clavijo is in charge of the live singing. The dance company trains professionals of alternative dance.

## **MODESTA SANGINES THEATRE – FRANZTAMAYO Cultural Centre – Av. Mariscal Santa Cruz with Potosi**

**Wednesdays from 6 to 7:30 PM**  
**A show of Bolivian folklore**

The Llaqta Tamayo Cultural Centre of Pelechuco, born in the Franz Tamayo Province of La Paz, will offer a recital aiming to promote its latest CD. Directed by Domingo Jové, this organization specializes in interpreting indigenous dances such as khatu, quenaquenas, sikuris from Italaque, tablasikus and laquitas among others. This musical evening will make you feel the strength of Andean instruments such as siku (panflute) and bombos (drums).

## **CAMARA THATRE JENARO SANJINÉS WITH IND- ABURO**

**Tuesday 24th and Wednesday 25th May**  
**Drama from El Alto**

**"Simbiosis Teatro", a company from El Alto**  
headed by Beimar Jorge Castillo Paco, presents its work of formation of young actors. Founded on the 12th of November 2006 in Villa Adela, the group started a program thanks to which 100 new actors were educated. In the context of this event, the newly-formed talents will be presented for the first time.

## **OPEN AIR THEATRE "JAIME LAREDO" EJERCITO AVENUE WITH AVENIDA DEL POETA**

**Friday 13th May 8 PM**  
**A Night with Fito Páez**

After his show the day before in the Municipal Theatre, Fito Páez will present himself in the Open Air Theatre. This Argentinian musician, rock singer, film-maker and scriptwriter was born in Rosario the 13th of March of 1963. He is very popular in Argentina as well as the rest of Latin America, Spain and England. He's recorded more than 20 discs in his prolific career, written scripts and directed as well as acted in three films.

## **MUSEOS MUNICIPALES, Tues-Fri, 9:30- 12:30 and 15:00-19:00; Sat & Sun 9:00-13:00. Calle Sucre corner w Calle Jaén**

**Museo Tambo Quirquincho**  
**Until Sunday 15th**

Exhibition by the Pedro Domingo Murillo Municipal Salon of Visual Arts, dedicated to the best artists of the '60s and '70s.

## **GOETHE-INSTITUT AVENIDA ARCE 2708 (with Cam- pos)**

**Thursday 5th and Friday 6th at 19:30 – Entrance  
Fee 10 Bolivianos**

In the Goethe Salon, Ikiru Theatre presents the novel "El Ponche de los Deseos" (in English "The Night of Wishes") by German writer Michael Ende, author of Momo and The Neverending Story.

**Monday 2nd to Saturday 14th at 19:30**  
**Bolivian-French-German Project: "Multilingual-  
ism, a key for your future"**

**Saturday 14th at 10:30, Plaza del Bicentenario**  
**Concert of the Franco-German duo Stereo Total.**

During their stay in La Paz these artists offer workshops for students of the Goethe Institut and Alliance Francaise.

## **NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ART, Comercio Street with Socabaya**

Saturday 21st at 19:00  
Fifth Grand Night of Museums  
Musical Presentations (Bolivian bands):  
Marabunta – 18:30 to 19:00  
Parafonista – 19:30 to 20:30  
Llegas – 21:30 to 22:30



Marabunta – 23:00 to 23:30

Kollamarka – 24:00 to 01:00

Throughout the day, art students of the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés will be presenting: life drawing and painting for the visiting public.

**ALLIANCE FRANCAISE – Av. 20 de Octubre with Fernando Guachalla**  
**Wednesday 11th at 19:30, Universidad Católica Boliviana – Free entry**

**“Learning languages: a necessity for today, a pleasure for always” – Dr. Claude Hagège**

Doctor Claude Hagège is the head of Department of linguistic theory in the Colegio Franco Boliviano (French high school of La Paz) and recipient in 1995 of the CNRS, National Centre of Scientific Investigation of France. An impeccable polyglot (he knows 50 languages and speaks many of them regularly) and linguist in the field, humanist and technical, Doctor Hagège defends the ethnologic and cultural links made through linguistics, with a discourse which communicates his passion outside of scientific circles to the general public.

**Tuesday 17th – 19:00**

**IFEA Conference – Alliance Francaise Auditorium. Free entry**

Youth and Social change: Social projects of “youth” in North Potosí, lecture by Claude Le Gouill

**Thursday 19th – 19:00**

**“Boos and Ideas” Conference**

**Thursday 12th – 19:30; UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA Boliviana. Free entry**

**“The roles of languages: maternal, second, and foreign”, a lecture by Dr. Uta Von Gleich**

Uta von Gleich followed postgraduate studies of General Linguistics and obtained a doctorate of Science of Education and Romantic Languages in the University of Hamburg. She trains teachers in Bilingualism, Language Teaching and Pedagogy. Since 2003 she is Associate Investigator in

the new Linguistics Centre of the University. She knows and speaks 9 languages including Quechua and Aymara.

**MUSEUM OF ETHNOGRAPHY and Folklore (MUSEF), Ingavi with Jenaro Sanjinés, 09:00 to 12:30 and 15:00 to 19:00. Tel. 22408640**  
**Saturday 21st – 22:00 Tel. 22408640**

**Fifth Grand Night of Museums**

**Presentation by Alaxpacha in the 17th Century patio of MUSEF**

Educative workshop by MUSEF – 17:00, at MUSEF workshop centre

Contests for children: Painting, creative writing, dancing, clay modeling and others

Presentation by the Folkloric Ballet of La Paz – 20:00 at the MUSEF Workshop centre

**The Bunker – Alternative Cultural Space. Uruguay Street, close to the Bus Terminal**

**Wednesday 4th to Saturday 7th – 20:00**

**The Bogatir Theatre presents the work “Theatre of Madness and Chaos”**

**Friday 27th to Sunday 29th – 20:00**

**Feroz Theatre takes the stage to present the play “Gallinas”**

**EL DESNIVEL, Capitan Ravelo street between Belisario Salinas and Puente de las Américas**  
**Friday 6th to Sunday 8th – 20:00**

**“Bonitas”, a play written and interpreted by Soledad Ardaya and María Teresa Dal Pero, directed by Cristian Mercado.**

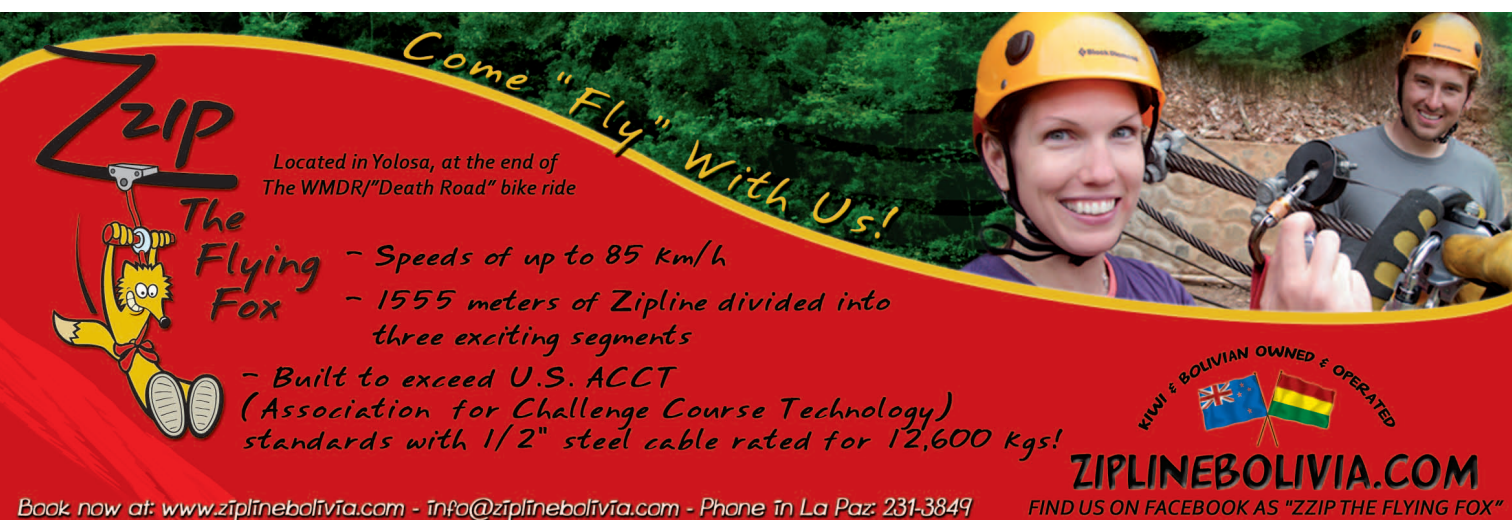
Adults: 30 Bolivianos. Students: 20 Bolivianos.

**Thursday 19th and Friday 20th – 20:30.**

**Parafonista in concert**

Musicians: Jorge Villanueva, Andy Burnett, Victor Hugo Guzman, Freddy Mendizabal and Alvaro Montenegro.

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